

1                   MR. BOTTINO: I've been able to build such  
2 a life for myself because of the opportunities  
3 provided to me by the existence of the casinos.

4                   In closing, I want to thank you for the  
5 chance to talk to you. It is my hope that you will  
6 keep in mind that there are many people like me on  
7 whom the gaming industry has made a positive impact.

8                   Thank you very much.

9                   CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you, Mr. Bottino.  
10                  Mr. Scotland.

11                  MR. SCOTLAND: Good evening. My name is  
12 John Scotland, and I'm the pastor of the Community  
13 Presbyterian Church of Brigantine.

14                  Tomorrow you will receive a copy of a  
15 study that our church commissioned with the United  
16 States Gambling Research Institute that was released  
17 today. That study was born from a need to better  
18 understand who we are and what God calls us to do as  
19 Presbyterians who live and work in the Atlantic City  
20 metropolitan area in times when gambling dominates the  
21 economic, social, and political ethos of this  
22 community.

1           You may want to read the article from this  
2 morning's Atlantic City Press, which we greatly  
3 appreciated. It gives a good synopsis of the outcome  
4 of the research.

5           Let me make some general comments based  
6 upon my six years of ministry here and the results of  
7 the recent study.

8           As a Presbyterian pastor, I stand with the  
9 members of my church who are sincerely conflicted  
10 about the costs and benefits of the casino gambling  
11 industry. That internal conflict makes it difficult  
12 for the church to be a good partner in community  
13 development.

14           Religious institutions of all faiths are  
15 struggling to find a proper role to play in the  
16 ongoing work of community building in and around  
17 Atlantic City. The moral battle over casino gambling  
18 has caused those concerned about prosperity to  
19 unfairly diminish the importance of religious  
20 institutions in the process of community development.

21           As a church, we stand with those who work  
22 in the industry. We have worked together side by side

1 in some important achievements for the betterment of  
2 the community. This labor force is my congregation,  
3 the parents of my children's friends and my neighbors.

4 Many have indicated to me a lack of job  
5 security and happiness, demanding schedules,  
6 hierarchical management, lack of ability to see a long  
7 term future, and meaninglessness. All contribute to  
8 general dissatisfaction.

9 As a church, we stand with those persons  
10 who have a gambling problem. Perhaps more  
11 importantly, we stand with their families who in cases  
12 of addiction suffer the most. We pray to God for  
13 forgiveness for our complicity as members of the state  
14 who not only provide gambling opportunities in  
15 Atlantic City, but who also promote gambling with our  
16 tax dollars.

17 As members of the state, we have  
18 contributed to the pain and anguish of problem  
19 gamblers and their families.

20 We stand with our neighbors and friends  
21 who are residents in Atlantic City. They alone face  
22 a political force and will that has decided to

1   sacrifice their neighborhoods and needs for the  
2   greater good of all of us.

3               We stand in solidarity with the poor and  
4   disenfranchised. They have not been the beneficiaries  
5   of casino industry as we have. There is an astounding  
6   lack of affordable, low income housing in Atlantic  
7   City. The unemployment rate in Atlantic City is a  
8   disgrace to all of us.

9               The presence of hungry, homeless, hurting  
10   people calls into question our ability to be builders  
11   of community.

12              We stand for children, especially the  
13   children of Atlantic City who have not received their  
14   fair share of this common wealth. The fact that we  
15   have not been able to build new elementary schools in  
16   Atlantic City is a shameful disgrace.

17              Casino gambling will never provide a just  
18   and sustainable community without a strong labor  
19   force, an informed public, dynamic schools, vibrant  
20   churches, and hard working public servants, all  
21   working in partnership with one another.

22              Thank you.